

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

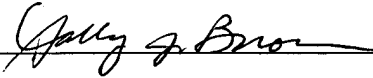
This Amendment is submitted in response to the final Office Action mailed March 22, 2004. At that time, claims 1, 4, 6-21 and 29 were pending in the application. In the Office Action, the Examiner allowed claims 1, 4, and 6-21. However, claim 29 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,816,610 to Higashiura, et al. ("Higashirua"). By this paper claim 16 has been amended to make a minor, non-limiting amendment. Claim 29 has been amended as agreed with the Examiner in the interview referenced below. Accordingly, claims 1, 4, 6-21, and 29 are believed to be in condition for immediate allowance.

Applicant would like to thank Examiner David R. Dunn for conducting a telephonic interview on May 12, 2004 with Applicant's attorneys Craig Metcalf (Reg. No. 31,398). Claim 29 was discussed in light of the §102(b) rejection over Higashirua. It was agreed that Higashirua does not teach the use of a metallic tubular sleeve for receiving an inflator. Accordingly, it was agreed that amending claim 29 to include definition of the tubular sleeve as being metallic would overcome the rejection in view of Higashura. It was also pointed out that the specification contains support for the proposed amendment, including at page 8, lines 9-10.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that all pending claims are now in condition for immediate allowance. If there are any remaining issues preventing allowance of the pending claims that may be clarified by telephone, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned.

Appl. No. 09/996,029
Amdt. dated June 16, 2004
Reply to Office Action of March 22, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sally J. Brown", is written over a horizontal line.

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Date: 6/16/09

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